GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
TOURISM AND CULTURE
LOK SABHA

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:5339
ANSWERED ON:29.04.2002
FREE PASSAGE TO FOREIGN JOURNALISTS
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Will the Minister of TOURISM AND CULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Department of Tourism extends free passage and hospitality to foreign journalists, photographers and tour-operators;

(b) if so, the details of such persons category-wise for whom such facility extended during 2000-01 and the total expenses incurred thereon;

(c) the manner and extent to which India was projected as an attractive multi- dimensional destination to attract tourists from abroad;

(d) whether the Comptroller and Auditor General of India has adversely commented upon the credentials of such overseas guests; and

(e) if so, the reaction of the Government thereto?

Answer

MINISTER OF TOURISM AND CULTURE (SHRI JAGMOHAN)

(a) In the past, the practice of giving free passage on hospitality has been there, but the matter is now under review.

(b) The journalists and other categories of persons who were extended hospitality for familiarization tours to India during the year 2000-01 is as under:

- Media Representatives : 132
- T.V. Teams : 7
- Travel Agents/Tour Operators : 112

These Mandatory Order passages were sanctioned by Ministry of Civil Aviation on Air India/Indian Airlines.

The total expenditure incurred under the above scheme during the year 2000-01 was Rs.38.97 Lakhs excluding air travel expenses.

(c) With a view to attract foreign tourists to India as a destination the following themes were projected:

? Culture
? History
? Beaches
? Royal Splendour
? Spiritualism/Health Rejuvenation
? Shopping Opportunities
? Himalayas
? Adventure Tourism
? Discover of roots for NRI's and PIO's

(d) The Comptroller and Auditor General has commented on the grant of hospitalityin one case to the same journalist, 3 times, without publicity return accruing after the visits to India.

(e) The Department of Tourism has decided to provide hospitality to a repeat departmental guest, if required, not earlier than three years, barring any exceptional case.